LITHUANIA RATIFIES CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS. The Seimas on 27 April unanimously ratified the 1950 European Human Rights and Basic Freedoms Convention. Lithuania accepted the convention by joining the Council of Europe in May 1993 and completed the formal ratification within the required two-year period. The Seimas did not consider ratifying Protocol 6 on the abolition of the death penalty, deeming it inappropriate because of the high crime rate in the country. -- Saulius Girnius, OMRI, Inc.

POPULARITY POLL IN LITHUANIA. Monthly polls conducted by the Lithuanian-British joint venture Baltic Surveys show that the popularity ratings of almost all political figures were higher in April than in March. The ratings of left-wing politicians registered larger increases than those of center or right-wing politicians. President Algirdas Brazauskas's rating rose eight points to 49%, probably due in part to his refusal to go to Moscow in May for the 50th anniversary celebrations of the end of World War II in Europe. Center Party Council Chairman Egidijus Bickauskas remained the most popular figure, with 57%, up five points from in March. Prime Minister Adolfas Slezevicius and Foreign Minister Povilas Gylys gained six points each, raising their ratings to 30% and 20%, respectively. -- Saulius Girnius, OMRI, Inc.

LITHUANIAN PRIME MINISTER IN SOUTH AMERICA. Lithuanian Prime Ministers Adolfas Slezevicius, accompanied by Transportation and Energy Ministers Jonas Birziskis and Aleksandras Stasiukynas, Bank of Lithuania Chairman Kazimieras Ratkevicius, and other officials, began a three-day state visit to Venezuela on 23 April. Slezevicius was scheduled to meet with President Rafael Caldera, the parliament chairman, and various ministers before moving on to Colombia on 27 April for talks with President Ernesto Samper Pizano, Foreign Minister Rodrigo Pardo, and other government officials. The purpose of the trip was to find investors for the Butinge oil terminal and to discuss purchases of a new type of fuel costing 30% less than the Russian black oil currently used by the power plant at Elektrenai. -- Saulius Girnius, OMRI, Inc.

POLISH DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER IN LITHUANIA. Polish Prime Minister Roman Jagielinski arrived in Vilnius on 24 April for a two-day visit to discuss expanding free trade between the two countries and to speak about Poland's experience in transforming agriculture in line with European Union standards. He held talks the same day with President Algirdas Brazauskas and Lithuanian Minister of Agriculture Vytautas Einoris. On 25 April Jagielinski visited the international agricultural fair "AgroBalt 95." -- Saulius Girnius